

GURU NANAK DEV JI AND MISLEADING INFORMATION

by Harnaak Singh 6-Jan-2017

Gur Sikh Jio. Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh.

Abstract

In this article we analyse the contents of a lecture by Karminder Singh held at Gurdwara Sahib Selayang Baru on 1-Jan-2017. We look at the contents of this lecture available in a video and highlight three major misgivings in this lecture.

First we look at the statement “I won’t wear it because you did not put it on for my elder sister Nanaki” purportedly by Guru Nanak Dev Ji. We show that this is not true.

Secondly we look at Karminder’s claim that Guru Nanak’s father was a Minister in the court of the then King. This again is shown to be false.

Thirdly we will analyse Karminder’s explanation about a couplet from the Tulsi Das Ramayana. His interpretation of this couplet is not consistent with the standard interpretation and therefore misleading.

Introduction

This article comments on the video lecture by Karminder Singh included in “Karminder, MGC get solid support from Selayang Gurdwara Leadership” Asia Samachar 2-Jan-2017.

A study of the video lecture reveals misleading information propagated to the Sangat. Three of these are discussed in this article.

Firstly in the video slide (see snapshot in Fig 1) Karminder implies that Guru Nanak, in reference to the Janaeu, stated “I won’t wear it because you did not put it on for my elder sister Nanaki” to the pundit. The discussion about Janaeu started at time 18:57 but the video lecture is abruptly terminated at time 19:01 in the video lecture, posted at the Asia Samachar website. This statement is false and misleading as there is no historical record of such a statement by Guru Nanak Dev Ji.

Secondly in the video lecture, starting at time 14:20, Karminder claims that Guru Nanak’s father, Mehta Kalyan Das was a minister **ਮੰਤਰੀ** in the court of the then king. This statement is also incorrect and misleading since historical records show that Guru Nanak’s father was a “patvari” meaning accountant and/or administrative officer.

The third misleading observation from the video lecture is at time starting 5:58. Karminder shows a couplet from Ramayana by Tulsi Das which he translates as “Livestock, stupid folk, low caste people, animals and women. These five are deserving of being caged and beaten.”

Karminder implies that this couplet degrades women. An analysis of this couplet reveals that the translation given by Karminder is misleading when checked with standard translations. It is unfortunate that not having sufficient knowledge about another faith Karminder misinterprets the couplet.

We shall address each of these three misleading observation in the ensuing analysis.

Guru Nanak Dev, Nanaki and the Janaeu

The slide in Fig 1 refers. The information in the slide is MISLEADING.

The quote at the bottom of the slide states “I won’t wear it because you did not put it on for my elder sister Nanaki”. From this slide it CLEARLY AND UNEQUIVOCALLY MEANS THAT THESE ARE THE WORDS of Guru Nanak Dev Ji.

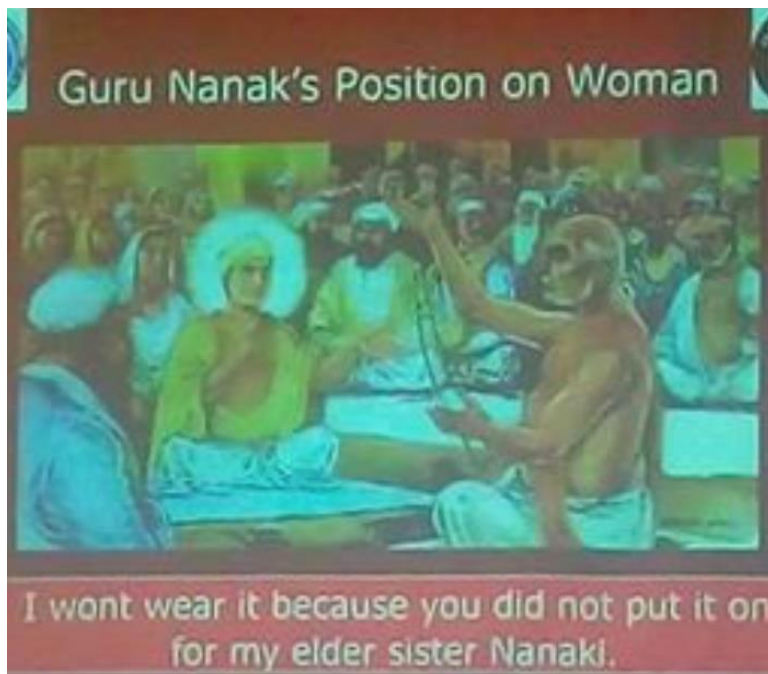


Fig 1: Guru Nanak, Nanaki and Janaeu

Some useful background information is in line here.

Karminder Singh in his article “Knowing Guru Nanak Sahib Ji” in Sikh Bulletin Jan-Feb 2016 (pages 11-12) states “Viewed collectively, these Janam Sakhis paint Guru Nanak... slept while cows ate the field... wink of eye brings field back to life...drowns in a river.. comes back three days later...brings dead people back to life...stops a mountain...This is the Guru Nanak that Sikhs seem to know”.

On the contents of this paragraph Karminder states “We want to stick to our “khyalee” beliefs and reject Guru Nanak’s real, practical and absolute enlightenment. To make our khyalee beliefs acceptable, we want to paint and portray Guru Nanak himself to be a practitioner and purveyor of our wrong beliefs.”

This implies that all the Sakhis that we been exposed to are “our khayalee” or “our fancy”. Therefore it is surprising that HE HIMSELF IS USING THE SAKHI to put forward his message.

This is very SURPRISING that he in one instance REJECTS Sakhis and at another instance uses them. Not only does he NOT USE the standard Sakhi as reference (which he implies are fancy) but he has gone way ahead of “fancy khayalee ਖਿਆਲੋਂ” to “FANTASY kalpanaa ਕਲਪਨਾ” in making up his story.

References referred to “Life of Guru Nanak” by Sarjit Singh, Punjab University, Chandigarh and “A Critical Study Of The Life And Teachings Of Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji” Dr Sewaram Singh Thapar, Commercial Union Press, Rawalpindi both do not indicate that Guru Nanak said such words.

However both references state he questioned and commented on the use of the sacred thread and recited some verses which are a part of the Asa Ki Var.

The verses quoted are on SGGS 471 starting “ਸਲੋਕੁ ਮਃ ੧ ॥ ਦਇਆ ਕਪਾਹੁ ਸੰਤੋਖੁ ਸੂਤੁ ਜਤੁ ਗੰਢੀ ਸਤੁ ਵਟੁ ॥.....”. Essentially Guru Ji is asking for a Janaeu that provides the quality of the virtues (Truth ਸਤੁ, Contentment ਸੰਤੋਖੁ, Compassion ਦਇਆ) which will not burn or get worn. The thread purchased for a few shells that is prepared by whispering instructions into one’s ears will not help the soul. One is involved in all the wrong doings (controlled by one’s five evils: Lust ਕਾਮ, Anger ਕਰੋਧ, Greed ਲੋਭ, Attachment ਮੋਹ, Ego ਹੰਕਾਰ). What use is the cotton Janaeu which has to be replaced when worn out. Guru Ji says the true thread is the praise of God which will never get worn nor break. Guru Ji further states the actions of the Brahmin who performs the ceremony are for payment, and that there is no thread for our sense and action organs (eyes, hands, legs etc) through which all the wrong activities are performed. Though the Brahmin is seen to be wise but actually he is blind to this fact.

Therefore, it is WRONG and MISLEADING, EVEN IN ONE SLIDE, to suggest that Guru Ji made a statement “I won’t wear it because you did not put it on for my elder sister Nanaki” during the ceremony.

Guru Nanak’s father was a Minister ਮੰਤਰੀ

In the video Karminder states that Guru Nanak’s Father, Mehta Kalyan Das Ji was a minister. This is a FALSE and MISLEADING claim.

Guru Nanak Dev’s father was “Kalyan Chand more commonly known as Mahita Kalu” who belonged to the Bedi Clan. He was a village “patvari”, i.e. a village accountant working for Rai Bular (Encyclopaedia of Sikhism Ed. Harbans Singh). Another reference “Life of Guru Nanak” by Sarjit Singh, Punjab University, Chandigarh also states the same (but spells name as Mehta Kalu). The word “patvari” means Village registrar or accountant (SGGS Gurmukhi-English Dictionary - sriganth.org), village level revenue official who keeps record

of land holding/surveys crops and calculates land revenue (Punjabi-English Dictionary Punjabi University Patiala).

Now to the question that Mehta Kalu was a Minister ਮੰਤਰੀ in the court of the then king. Karminder implies that Mehta Kalu was a minister based on the word “Mehta”.

Wikipedia gives the meanings of Mehta as follows: Mehta is a surname, it means “chief” in Sanskrit; in Rajasthan the term is applied to non-Rajput administrative officers, in Gujarat this term is used for teachers and accountants; among Oswals, Porwal Baniyas and Punjabi Khatri, it is a clan name. In the case of Guru Nanak Dev Ji’s father it cannot mean “clan” since they were of Bedi clan. So it must imply accountant, and/or administrative officer. This is in agreement with the Encyclopaedia of Sikhism and reference “Life of Guru Nanak”.

Karminder refers to the word ਮਹਤਾ in Gurbani (SGGS 468) and assumes that based on this word, Mehta in Mehta Kalu means Minister. This word is a noun meaning (1) important, significant, greatness (Mahan Kosh and Dictionary Uni Patiala) (2) One who is great Minister, Head (Mahan Kosh). In the context of this verse (SGGS 468) the meaning is “minister”, but on SGGS 965 the same word means “majesty”, and on SGGS 999 it means “self-importance”. All three words are used as a noun.

We do not think it is prudent to use the SGGS Ji to obtain the meaning of a NAME or SURNAME.

Further if Mehta Kalu was a minister, he would be a minister of the king (Ibrahim Lodi), but he was in the employ of Rai Bular who was a feudal landlord and the father-in-law of Daulat Khan Lodi. Daulat Khan Lodi was the Governor of Punjab during the reign of Ibrahim Lodi.

Therefore the statement that Mehta Kalu was a MINISTER is FALSE.

Guru Nanak’s father was, as the references state, a village “patvari” an accountant and revenue keeping official under the employ of Rai Bular. As far as the “hundreds (many lakhs) of thousands of people attending” the janaeu ceremony, though the NUMBERS GIVEN ARE SUSPECT, is concerned, it could have been financed by Rai Bular who had a special respect and liking for Guru Nanak Dev Ji.

It is UNFATHOMABLE that the SANGAT is told such FALSE and MISLEADING INFORMATION and asked to forget about what they have learnt from history. We might add that this is highly IRRESPONSIBLE.

Couplet in Ramayana by Tulsi Das

The comments by Karminder on Tulsi Das Ramayana in the video will now be addressed. Figure 2: Couplet from Tulsi Das Ramayana refers.



Fig 2: Couplet from Tulsi Das Ramayana

It is UNFORTUNATE that NOT KNOWING ENOUGH about ANOTHER FAITH Karminder MISINTERPRETS verses in the Tulsi Das Ramayana, a sacred scripture of the Hindu faith. Karminder lists the couplet (see slide Fig 2) as follows.

Dhor, Gavaar, Shudar, Psu, Naree. Yeh Pancho Tarran Ke Adhikari

Livestock, Stupid folk, Low caste People, Animals and Women These Five are Deserving of being Caged and Beaten.

The actual couplet is

“Dhola Gavara Sudra Pasu Nari, Sakala Tarana ke Adhikari”

A drum, a rustic, a Sudra, a beast and a woman - all these deserve instructions.

(Ref: page 820 Sundara-kanda; Sri Ramacharitamanasa (Ramayana) by Tulsi Das, Gita Press, Gorakhpur, India).

Background to the couplet: The sea-god Samudra, refusing initially to pave way for the army, eventually bows in to the wishes of Lord Ram out of fear that the Lord might unleash his anger on him. Samudra, the sea-god, requests for forgiveness and it is in this context that he utters these words asking Ram to forgive him as he was naturally dumb and does not know how to behave himself. This couplet was recited by the “sea god” in a fearful state begging for his life from Ram who calls him idiot and rogue and was about to dry up the ocean.

There are two interpretations of this couplet:

(1) A drum, a rustic, a sudra, a beast and a woman all these deserve instructions. In this way, knowing their boundaries for which they were created, they would attain happiness.

(2) I am like uneducated drum (making noise) or like a woman who behaves like a low animal and breaks social order, and therefore deserves punishment.

In both cases, in essence the sea-god, speaking METAPHORICALLY, is asking for forgiveness and direction and is prepared to accept punishment. There is no mention about SOMEONE BEING CAGED AND BEATEN in the meanings of the couplet.

Once again we repeat it is UNFORTUNATE THAT Karminder NOT KNOWING ENOUGH of another FAITH'S GRANTH MISINTERPRETS IT. This action to comment negatively on the scriptures of another faith LACKS PRUDENCE and shows LACK OF RESPECT. We might further add that Guru Nanak in our scriptures alluded people to the non-beneficial rituals they were practicing but never commented on the scriptures negatively.

Therefore we repeat that it is unfortunate that Karminder NOT KNOWING ENOUGH about ANOTHER FAITH, MISINTERPRETS verses in the sacred scripture of that faith.

Conclusion

The analysis shows that with the message, about Guru Nanak Dev and Janaeu, Karminder in the slide is MISLEADING the Sangat by propagating information that is not consistent with credible historical records. It is WRONG and MISLEADING, EVEN IN ONE SLIDE, to suggest that Guru Ji, during the ceremony, made a statement "I won't wear it because you did not put it on for my elder sister Nanaki".

Further, he is making an attempt to change historical knowledge in the minds of the Sangat by propagating that Guru Nanak Dev Ji's father was a "minister" in the court of the then King, while historical records show that he was a village accountant cum administrative officer. It is UNFATHOMABLE that the SANGAT is told such FALSE and MISLEADING INFORMATION and asked to forget about what they have learnt from history. This is highly IRRESPONSIBLE action on the part of Karminder.

It is UNFORTUNATE THAT Karminder NOT KNOWING ENOUGH of another FAITH'S GRANTH, MISINTERPRETS IT. This action to comment negatively on the scriptures of another faith LACKS PRUDENCE and shows LACK OF RESPECT. We might further add that Guru Nanak in our scriptures alluded people to the non-beneficial rituals they were practicing but never commented on the scriptures negatively.

It is sad to see such FALSEHOOD being propagated to the Sangat. These actions come across as being HIGHLY IRRESPONSIBLE.

This is not the kind of DISTORTION we want our YOUNGER GENERATION to be EXPOSED to. There is a need for the Sangat to BEWARE and AWARE of the DISTORTED PREACHING being conducted.

Thank You for listening/ reading. ਗਲਤੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਖਿਮਾ.

Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh.